

# Island Senior Resources

*Island Senior Resources is the trade name of Senior Services of Island County*

## Small Towns, Big Solutions

A revolution, as large in scope and with implications as great as the industrial revolution, is emerging. At a time when our national consensus seems to be dissolving, inspiration at the local level is providing solutions to urgent and seemingly insurmountable challenges.

In small towns and cities across America, momentum is building to enable, empower, and catalyze hometown resources. Fragmented efforts are now being replaced by a focus on common challenges and shared solutions. How are they achieving what otherwise sounds merely hopeful? It takes leadership, collaboration, determination, patience, perseverance, and people invested in working together to define a different future. We are in an era of fertile imagining.

Progress has a new face and it is smiling. Communities are re-purposing old buildings, enticing tech start-ups and young workers with families, welcoming entrepreneurs, and building collaborations between educational systems and businesses to offer youth a better tomorrow. Those who might never gather in unity on national politics are finding new ways to work together to shepherd change. No single effort changes a community, but the cumulative power of a multitude of micro changes is transformative.

In Eastport, Maine, a tiny, remote, oceanside community with a predominantly older white population, and a median household income of \$27,000, a creative, transformative recovery has occurred. Six baby-boomer women joined to



“make something real happen, to benefit the community.” They found an abandoned building that would make an ideal space to showcase the work of local artists. It had enough space for two apartments to rent, and a storefront to sell food. They called it “The Commons” expressing the intention of their vision. A woman from Canada joined them as an “international partner,” another woman from the local tribe joined as their “wisdom partner,” and a southern black woman stepped forward as their “spiritual partner.” Local men renovated the building. The community felt strong ownership for this communal space that helps artists thrive.

This resourceful group of women also saw that the media was portraying Eastport negatively. They worked to transform the language the media used from “de” words: *decline, depressed, dependent, despairing*, to “re” words: *rediscover, redesign, reverse, renew, reenergize, and reemerge*. **It made a difference.** This determined group of women led the way, collaborated with others, and made it happen. Did one effort change the face of the community? Maybe not, but when combined with other ideas that were simultaneously breathing life into the local economy, a struggling town is transforming.

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As our community strives to meet the needs of an increasing senior population, Island Senior Resources provides resources to those navigating these concerns. Providing resources requires resourcefulness, and we are witnessing the community collaboration that leads to a better future. When our *Time Together* South program needed a larger, more comfortable space than the one it occupied in our Bayview facility, the congregation at St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods, led by The Reverend Nigel Taber-Hamilton, was determined to protect and expand this vital resource for our community. They re-designed a space at the church and offered it to *Time Together*. Island Transit's paratransit joined in and has offered a van to provide transportation for participants. That's how leadership, collaboration, determination, patience, perseverance, and people acting together locally, is making a fundamental difference.



The congregation at St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods.

We welcome everyone in the community to step forward with new thinking and uncover potential collaborative solutions that will map a path to a livable future for every senior, adult with disability, and those who care for them. Now is the time to reimagine the future. Failure is not an option; one in every eight persons in Island County depends on us today for essential resources, and that number is rising rapidly. Together, our community *can* do things we haven't imagined doing before and create a different future.

Transformation is a purposeful and organic process that takes time. Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can do something or think you can't, you're right either way." Well, Henry, you are right, together we *can*.

— Robin Bush, Outreach Manager

## Building The Future Together

It is amazing what happens when you ask the right questions! In developing our strategic plan 2019–2021, Island Senior Resources' Strategic Planning Committee has fanned out across Island County to gather input on the needs of seniors and adults with disabilities. We've talked with hundreds of people throughout Island County: residents, elected officials, representatives from Island County Human Services, EMS, the Sheriff's Department, Sno-Isle Library Managers, and more. We are grateful for the willingness of community members to join us in this process.

Why are we doing this? In a county with a high percentage of seniors and a relatively low overall population, we are challenged to target resources and strengthen our ability to keep up with the anticipated growth in the senior population. Island County has the largest percentage of seniors of any county in the state (23.2%), and the largest percentage of veterans (nearly 15%), most of whom served in Vietnam.

We are assessing the most pressing needs, what is currently being done to address those needs, and how communities and organizations can partner more effectively to meet increasing needs as demographics climb. We are exploring models that demonstrate proven practices to address key needs and evaluating the most effective and efficient uses of people and financial resources both internally and collaboratively.

By January 2019, we will have honed a new vision, revitalized our mission statement, and crafted a strategic plan that focuses our efforts on desired outcomes. We anticipate publishing a report to the community on our findings in early 2019. *Forward!*

— Cheryn Weiser,  
Executive Director



## The Promise

How many of us ever *plan* to be a family caregiver? Do we consider what we might do if someone close to us needs help to do everyday things? It's not something most of us think about until we are facing it, head on.

Years ago, my mom made me promise never to put her in a nursing home. At the time, it seemed crazy to even think about that. She was our "rocket of a mom," always in control, the family manager, or as my ex-navy dad used to say, jokingly, "She's like a ship in full sail."

Who knew that years later, she would be diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and slowly, over twenty years need more and more care. It has been, and continues to be, a long and winding road filled with countless unimaginable challenges.

Mom never talked about the changes that were happening to her. We did our best to organize things for her in ways that were non-confrontational. We learned not to talk to her about her memory loss, or its challenges. She'd become angry and unaccepting of our version of things. One time, I pulled in the driveway, opened the car door and immediately smelled something burning. I raced to the door, found it locked, and knocked loudly. Finally, she opened the door, and said, "Hello love" in her carefree, loving way. I ran inside to find a roast, the size of a baseball, black and charred in the oven. It had been cooking for hours, and mom didn't know anything about it. That was the day we disconnected the oven and ordered Meals on Wheels. We didn't talk with her about why; we just did it. We told her that she deserved to have her meals made for her, after all, she had worked all her life cooking for us.



My brother became mom's caregiver. In the beginning, he would drop in a for few hours each day, making sure she took her meds and got her meals. Over time, it became twice a day; then later, he slept there. Finally, he decided mom needed to move in with him. That worked for a couple of years until a chest infection triggered a progression in her Alzheimer's which culminated in a dramatic scene in the street, with police, an ambulance, and mom screaming. In her mind, she was being attacked. It was traumatic for everyone.

In consultation with specialists and social workers, we decided that a memory care unit was the best option. She hated it in the beginning. She knew it wasn't "home." She would yell at us that we were trying to kill her. It was heartbreaking at first, but we knew she was surrounded by compassionate staff who provided the care she needed. Eventually, she settled in and began to make friends, which is something she hadn't done since Dad passed away. We believe it is the best option; I am OK with breaking that promise I made to my mom all those years ago. I had no idea what I was promising, and no idea what was coming. We never thought this could happen in our family.

The chance that you will become a family caregiver, a care receiver, or both, in your lifetime, is high. Maybe you are on that journey now. If you need help, Island Senior Resources is here for you. Help is closer than you think.

— Mel Watson, Director,  
Time Together Adult Day Services

## Opportunity, Generosity, Gratitude

### “ A PHONE CALL THIS WEEK CHANGED EVERYTHING.

*My nephew called to say that my sister, who lives in Virginia Beach, woke up not knowing where she was, or who he was; she was certain the house was filled with strangers. She's in the hospital fading in and out of knowing who she is (or was) and who the family and friends surrounding her are. Just the day before she had been volunteering as she did every Wednesday at her local food bank, looking after her fellow volunteers, and knowing the names of most of those seeking sustenance. Now I am asking myself how the family will manage the care she will need when she comes home and what my new role will be. This is my sister, but it could be you, your family or someone you love, today or tomorrow.*”

Unexpected changes can happen to any one of us, and when they do, the uncertain future of care needs can be overwhelming. Where do we turn? In Island County, we turn to Island Senior Resources. Knowing the resources are there when I need them makes all the difference. As a donor, you and your generosity provide the resources we need to be here for everyone in our community. ***You make it possible.***

Our volunteers, board of directors, and donors experience a fuller life through the act of giving. Every gift of time, talent, skills, creativity, and money are gratefully received and used efficiently and effectively. As one donor said, “there was a time \$100 would have changed my life. This month I have \$100 left. Lend it or give it to someone to change their life.” Your financial support will change lives. ***You make a difference.***

Recently I spent time working with volunteers at Senior Thrift. Some have spent over three decades volunteering, several times a week. Why do they do it? Because “I make new friends,” “I am with friends,” “I like serving friends.” It is part of the fiber of their daily lives, and they take ownership of the work they do. They find dignity and satisfaction in their work. They give generously of themselves to help others, knowing every sale at the store supports our programs. ***Your generosity will help others too.***

Similar feelings are echoed by volunteers in each of our programs. There is deep caring for the participants in *Time Together*. Drivers for *Meals on Wheels* get to know those who receive the meals and watch for changes that require additional assistance. Volunteer drivers for *Medical Transportation* know just how vital those medical appointments are. Those we serve are not clients; they are people we come to know. ***You make all that possible.***

Throughout Island Senior Resources, the caring by friends for friends is the nature of our service. We are resilient, determined to create a sustainable program and adapt to ever-changing circumstances because we are part of this community, and we care. We are happy you are part of our community of friends and are helping to shape the world we live in. ***Thank you for caring... and doing!***

I find comfort in knowing that Island Senior Resources partners with each of us as we explore opportunities for ourselves or those we care about. We hear from those we serve, “This is an essential service. We prefer to support local services.” “Give now, receive later.” “We all grow older every day.” “The act of true giving is always receiving an even greater gift.” ***Please give now. Your generosity helps our entire community. We are here for you, and you are here for us. We are deeply grateful.***

— Cynthia Trowbridge, President,  
Island Senior Resources Board

## A Day in the Life of an Aging & Disability Resource Specialist

You might wonder what an Aging & Disability Resource Specialist is, and what they do in a day. They help seniors and adults with disabilities find answers to a vast variety of concerns and, the number of requests is increasing daily. (Anticipated service levels for the year were surpassed by July). No one is turned away; every question is given full attention, and every available resource is utilized. Let's walk in their shoes for a day: The phone rings more than 20 times with callers seeking answers, email inquiries fill the inbox, and people wait in the lobby for the opportunity to talk face-to-face:

- A family caregiver needs care for his aunt with memory loss so that he can re-energize. He is guided to the *Family Caregiver Support Program*. He receives funding to hire a caregiver and is helped to make a care plan.
- A young woman is having difficulty with her dad's social security benefits — she finds out who to call and how to resolve her issues.
- An application is filed online for a woman who qualifies for the Medicare savings program. Approval means the state will pay for her Part B coverage, saving her \$134/month.
- Two different people come in for farmers market vouchers. Now, they will receive free fresh vegetables at local markets all summer.
- One gentleman calls for family caregiver support. He is referred to our Family Caregiver Support Specialist who encourages him to attend our *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* class and helps create a plan for ongoing support and guidance.
- A woman calls, needing help with cleaning and gardening. She is given our list of private in-home providers and guidance on how to safely hire an in-home worker.
- A woman and her son come in to make a plan for dealing with the progression

of her early stage dementia. Several resources are discussed, and they are connected to our *Time Together* Director to learn how *Time Together* provides engagement for participants and respite for caregivers.

- A couple, forced from their rental home that is being sold, is provided a list of low-income housing resources and is helped to file a housing request with the Island County Housing Support Center.
- A man comes in to ask for help with transportation to Seattle for his wife's dialysis treatment, three times a week. We connect him with our *Volunteer Transportation* program to arrange for a volunteer driver.
- A man calls to arrange *Meals on Wheels* for his parents. He lives out of town but knows they aren't eating. Arrangements are made for hot meals to be delivered three times a week. Other caregiving options are discussed to ensure all their needs are met.
- A man calls offering to volunteer for Island Senior Resources. He's retired and wants to help others.
- A woman, new to Medicare, brings in her bills and claim forms for an explanation.
- A couple calls for information about the senior property tax exemption that is income and age-based. They qualify and are helped with the application.
- It's the end of the day, and a call comes in from people who need help but can't come to our offices. Our specialist schedules a home visit and brings information on available resources.

It's a full day, every day. Some needs are urgent, others take navigation through complex systems, and others involve planning for sustaining care for loved ones. Asking for help made all the difference for each of these people who reached out. ***No matter the need, we are here to help. We can make the difference for you too.***



AGING (ife CARE)  
ASSOCIATION

## 2018 Matching Gift

A generous community member has offered Island Senior Resources a 2018 matching gift. *Any gift donated to us by a new donor, or someone who increases their donation, will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$25,000.* We encourage you to increase your donation, or donate to us for the first time, to help us receive this generous gift.

## Time Together Nestles In

With deep gratitude, we thank St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods, Freeland, for opening their doors and hearts to provide a new home for our *Time Together* South program. The congregation epitomizes the partnership and commitment to community that drives positive change. *Time Together* serves adults age 19–104 with cognitive or physical disabilities, providing rest for caregivers and engagement for participants. Our beautiful new home, surrounded by trees and nesting birds, and held by a welcoming community at the church, offers a large, comfortable space for music, art, storytelling, meals, gardening, and simple kitchen activities. Call Mel Watson, Director of *Time Together* at (360) 321-1623 to learn about the program and arrange to visit either the south-island or north-island locations.



## CamBey "Adopted"

This fall, the HUD subsidized CamBey apartments, owned and operated by Island Senior Resources, is being purchased by the Low-Income Housing Institute (LIHI), which will continue to operate CamBey as low-income housing for seniors and adults with disabilities. LIHI has been a great partner in assuring the future of this valuable housing resource. All those currently residing at CamBey will remain in their apartments during, and after, the transition.



## SHIBA Medicare Open Enrollment Has Begun

SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) offers assistance with Medicare enrollment at the Resource Center in Bayview, WhidbeyHealth, and Oak Harbor Senior Center. SHIBA can help determine the best plan for you and your needs at the lowest cost. Getting Ready for Medicare classes are also offered each month along with private consults. Call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373 to make an appointment.



## This is What Leadership Looks Like

**Leadership is listening.** Interviewing community members, meeting with regional government councils, and holding focus groups with the community to understand the needs of seniors and adults with disabilities is how our Board is hearing community needs before creating our strategic plan for 2019–2021.

**Leadership is vision.** Our board believes the resources we provide are essential and that our strength lies in our resilience during turbulent times.

**Leadership is action.** By rolling up their sleeves and supporting fundraising events and launching our major donor initiative, our board is helping to secure the financial resources Island Senior Resources needs to do what we do. Thank you, board members, for your leadership.

## Collaborative Resources

ISR collaborates with specialists to provide unique informational resources for our community.

Our weekly Lunch & Learn programs in Bayview and Coupeville offer speakers from throughout the community.

Kathleen Landel, certified dementia care trainer, has taught classes about the stages of dementia and caregiving challenges. Sue Mills, author and expert in senior isolation and loneliness and its impact on health, has taught a series of classes. The Alzheimer's Association held a seminar on Early Stage Memory Loss.



## Her Socks

### A Simple Act of Caring

*Dr. Wilson finished examining his patient. After the exam, the patient's daughter "Melanie," who was in the room, reached out and put her mother's socks on. The doctor watched and nodded. He could have done that, he thought; after all, he'd been the one who took the socks off when he performed the exam. Replacing the socks was such a simple act of caring, and he knew that those socks were just one of hundreds of acts of caring the daughter did for her mother each day.*

Over 850,000 Washington State citizens are unpaid family caregivers. While caring for a relative or friend, many also hold down jobs and care for their own family. They help with daily needs, medications, transportation, cooking and cleaning, manage bills, and often perform significant amounts of medical care, allowing their loved ones to remain at home as long as possible. A third of caregivers provide more than 20 hours of care per week. The economic value of family caregiving in the US is estimated to be \$470 billion each year, according to AARP. We cannot afford to lose this essential workforce.

Today, more than ever, we need to support unpaid caregivers. Most caregivers face increasing financial challenges. 24% of caregivers must end their employment due to their caregiving responsibilities, and many more must reduce the hours they work. Caregivers deserve support! Their health and emotional wellbeing are at risk due to the stress and physical demands of caregiving. 45% of caregivers have their own health limitations and 50% score high in screenings for depression. "Each day, I wake up with two voices in my head. One says, 'How am I ever going to do this again today?' The other says, 'I am so thankful to have another day with Mom.' It's exhausting, but it means so much to me to help her. Our time together is a gift to both of us," says "Melanie."

You are not alone. Help is available at Island Senior Resources. If you or someone you know is a caregiver,



please reach out to us. Getting support is the best way to make sure you are there for your loved ones. You help because you care. Now it's time to care for yourself. Our *Family Caregiver Support Program* is here to guide your journey. We work with caregivers to determine their needs and arrange for help. We offer support groups, classes, and assistance with caregiving costs and respite.

Many of us will care for others who experience illnesses, disabilities, or just the challenges of aging. Caregiving can be rewarding but also demanding. Support makes a difference! With support, caregivers show decreased stress, decreased depression, and improved relationships with their care receiver.

Caregiving is love, support, and attention, not just to the big things, but the little things, too. Caregiving is taking care of each other. We all do it. We are a caring community. We know, putting socks on, matters.

— Chasity Smith, Director,  
Aging & Disability Resources



# Island Senior Resources Board of Directors

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**Island Senior Resources**  
14594 SR 525  
Langley, WA 98260  
[www.senior-resources.org](http://www.senior-resources.org)



**Executive Director:**  
Cheryn Weiser

## Contact Us

**Website:**

[www.senior-resources.org](http://www.senior-resources.org)

**Facebook:**

[facebook.com/islandseniors](https://facebook.com/islandseniors)

**Email:**

[reception@islandseniorservices.org](mailto:reception@islandseniorservices.org)

**Phone:**

(360) 321-1600 or (360) 678-3373

## Our Locations

**Island Senior Resources (Bayview)**

14594 SR 525, Langley, WA 98260  
(Just south of Bayview Road)

**Oak Harbor Senior Center**

51 SE Jerome St., Oak Harbor, WA 98277  
(Opposite OH Elementary School)  
*(in collaboration with OH Senior Center)*

**Senior Thrift**

5518 Woodard Rd., Freeland, WA 98249  
(Just north of Main Street)

**Camano Center**

606 Arrowhead Rd.,  
Camano Island, WA 98282  
(Near Utsalady Elementary School)  
*(in collaboration with Camano Center)*

## 12 Days of Whidbey Raffle

**A fundraiser for Island Senior Resources | December 1–12 | Amazing prizes each day!**

Each **\$5** ticket enters you in all **12** separate raffle drawings. Daily raffle drawings worth \$250+ each.

Each prize has a different theme and contains multiple items:

- Wine & Chocolate Covered Island
- Cook it Up in the Kitchen
- Golf on the North End
- Family Nights on the Town in Oak Harbor
- Family Fun
- Caffeinated Whidbey
- Reader's Treasury
- Spirits of Whidbey
- Beautify for Winter
- Garden Dreaming
- Holiday Cheer
- That's Italian

Raffle tickets go on sale November 1 at **Island Senior Resources (Bayview)** and **Senior Thrift**.

Watch our Facebook page and website for additional ticket sales locations: [www.senior-resources.org](http://www.senior-resources.org)

**Every ticket supports our programs and helps others in the community. Buy as many tickets as you can!**